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CANADIAN CONFEDERATION.

THE CASE OF NOVA SCOTIA.

THE undersigned, Delegates from Nova Scotia, charged with an Address to the Crown, unanimously adopted by the Legislative Assembly of that Province, and a Petition to both Houses of Parliament, submit the following brief statement of facts for the consideration of the Government, Parliament, and people of England:—

The Province of Nova Scotia, settled and improved by emigrants from the British Islands and their descendants, for over a hundred years has enjoyed Representative Institutions, and for a quarter of a century has been in full possession of the largest measure of liberty, short of representation in the Imperial Parliament, applicable to a Colony of the Empire.

The people of Nova Scotia, during that period, have always been steadfast in their allegiance to the Throne, and have never, by malfeasance or rebellion, forfeited the rights and immunities under which their country has thriven and prospered.

Following in the footsteps of the mother-country, the Legislature of Nova Scotia early adopted a free-trade policy, imposing duties only for revenue purposes, which has been attended with the most cheering results in the expansion of commerce and the growth of her mercantile marine.

By an Act passed during the last Session of the Imperial Parliament, the institutions under which the Province had flourished and expanded were rudely overthrown, its people deprived of the management of their own affairs, its free-trade policy reversed, and from being a self-governed, independent Colony, Nova Scotia was suddenly reduced to the condition of a dependency of Canada.

Apprehensive that the scheme of Colonial Confederation might find favour with the Imperial Government, and justly alarmed at the consequences of extending the protective policy of Canada to the Maritime Provinces and the prostration of their system of self-government, the people of Nova Scotia sent Delegates to this country with Petitions, signed by 31,000 persons, protesting against union with Canada, and praying delay in legislation until the people, at the General Election to come off in a few weeks, had an opportunity to express their opinion in a constitutional manner.

This reasonable request was denied, and acting upon the suggestions of certain persons from Nova Scotia, who it is now apparent misrepresented the public sentiment of the country and grossly deceived the Imperial Parliament, the measure was hurried through, and the New Dominion, as it is called, was proclaimed on the first of July.

Of the six Delegates who were here last year, co-operating with the Canadians to confederate the British North American Provinces, only three ventured to appeal to the people at the General Election which came off in September last. One of these was beaten by an overwhelming majority; another polled less than 400 votes out of 1500; and the third, the late leader of the Government of Nova Scotia, was returned with a small majority at a ruinous cost, under protest for bribery and corruption, and was compelled to go to Ottawa without a single follower elected in favour of confederation.

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It is almost impossible to imagine a greater degree of unanimity than was manifested at the Elections, which resulted in the returns—

FOR THE GENERAL PARLIAMENT.

Members opposed to Confederation	18
" in favour of Confederation	1
	19

FOR THE LOCAL LEGISLATURE.

Members opposed to Confederation	36
" in favour of Confederation	2
	38

The Dominion Parliament met in November last. The Nova Scotia contingent, though they went to Ottawa in obedience to the law, took their seats under protest, and for forty days fairly tested the new system, the results of which far exceeded their worst anticipations. The Canadians protected their own manufactures against those of the mother-country by increasing our *ad valorem* duties from 10 to 15 per cent. They protected their bread stuffs against those of the United States, largely used in the Maritime Provinces, by duties on flour, corn, and corn-meal. They laid on stamp and newspaper taxes, which were unknown in Nova Scotia. They also taxed our Bank circulation, which at once raised the rate of discount from 6 to 7 per cent.

Only one of the nineteen Members from Nova Scotia, and but three of the fifteen from New Brunswick, voted for the tariff, but their united efforts only showed how completely our self-government, of which we were so justly proud, had been swept away.

The disastrous character of this measure may be gathered from the Petition, which will be speedily presented to the Lords and Commons, signed by sixteen of the nineteen Members elected to the Ottawa Parliament, and by thirty-six of the thirty-eight Representatives of Nova Scotia.

"The people of Nova Scotia protest against this Act of Union, because it deprives them of the right of self-government, long enjoyed and highly prized.

"It subjects them to enormous cost and great inconvenience, by compelling them to transact, in a city eight hundred miles away, a vast amount of public business formerly despatched in their own Capital, within easy reach of the whole population.

"It transfers to the Government at Ottawa powers more extensive than the Queen and the Imperial Parliament in practice ever exercised; and vests in that Government, which the people of Nova Scotia can rarely hope to influence, the entire patronage of the Post Office and Revenue Departments, and of the Lighthouses and Public Works, constructed at great expense by the people of Nova Scotia.

"It transfers the ownership of our Provincial Railways, built at a cost of a million-and-a-half of pounds currency, to the Dominion, without equivalent or compensation.

"It takes from Nova Scotia the regulation of her Trade, of her Banking System and Savings' Banks, of her sea-coast and Inland Fisheries, of her Militia, of her Courts and Criminal Law.

"It transfers the Customs' Duties of Nova Scotia, always amply sufficient for general and local services, and rapidly increasing under a low tariff, to Canada, for a sum which is now no equivalent, and which, being limited in amount, will establish a perpetual drain upon our resources as those revenues expand.

"It confers upon the Parliament of Canada the right to burden our trade with the rest of the Empire and with the world at large for her own advantage, to protect her manufactures and bread-stuffs, and to burden our industry by 'any mode or system of taxation.'

"It vests in the Government of Canada the appointment of our Governors, who will thus become the mere tools of the Canadian Administration, instead of being, as they were, the impartial Representatives of the Crown.

"Of twelve Senators already appointed by the Canadian Ministers, but one shares the opinions of the people of Nova Scotia, and four at least have been purchased by the distinction to change their opinions and betray their country.

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"For these and many other reasons that might be stated, this Act of Union has been, and is, most distasteful to the people of Nova Scotia, who believe it to be fraught with evil, uncalled for, and unjust.

"But their approval of the Act itself has been aggravated and rendered more intense by the mode in which it was prepared and carried, which the undersigned do not hesitate to characterize as a surprise upon the people of Nova Scotia and a fraud upon the Imperial Parliament.

"Though this question has so deeply stirred their feelings, the Elections from end to end of the Province have been carried without a blow being struck, a disloyal sentiment uttered, or any necessity, as in Canada, for military interference at the Polls. The people, relying on the high sense of honour which distinguishes British statesmen and on the protection of Parliament, defeated in a peaceful and orderly manner those who had betrayed them."

The local Legislature met in January, when a series of Resolutions was unanimously adopted by the House of Assembly, followed by an Address to the Crown, which declares that "The loyal people of Nova Scotia do not desire to be in any manner confederated with Canada;" praying Her Majesty "to revoke her Proclamation, and to cause the British North America Act to be repealed, as far as it affects the Province of Nova Scotia."

The Resolutions and Address to the Crown were followed by two other Resolutions, passed with the same unanimity, authorizing the Lieutenant-Governor to appoint Delegates, who are now here, charged to use all legitimate means to restore the Constitution of the Province; and then the House adjourned to August next, declining to do any business, or in any way compromise the rights of the people by legislating in subordination to the Dominion of Canada.

One fact is sufficient to show the utter recklessness and haste with which the British North America Act and the Inter-Colonial Railway Guarantee Act which accompanied it were passed, when it is stated that Nova Scotia had, at that very time, upon her own credit, provided for all that part of the road which crossed her territory, that she is now under contract to build it, and is anxious to complete her fair and full share of the Inter-Colonial Railway without any guarantee or aid from the Imperial Government.

We further submit that all the alleged advantages of Confederation with Canada might have been obtained in a safer and simpler form without requiring Nova Scotia to surrender her rights of self-government.

The Government, Legislature, and people of Nova Scotia, in seeking a repeal of the British North America Act, so far as it affects their own Province, have no desire to evade their obligations to the mother-country. On the contrary, their desire is to reduce the existing taxes upon the manufactures of England, believing, as they do, that it is wrong in principle for a Colony to impose heavy burthens upon the country under whose flag it seeks shelter and protection. Neither have they any wish to draw upon the Imperial Exchequer or ask guarantees in aid of public works, which they will be prepared, if their Constitution is restored, to construct upon their own credit and resources. And they will cheerfully contribute, to the utmost extent of their ability, in defending their own Province and maintaining the integrity of the Empire.

JOSEPH HOWE, M.P.
For the County of Hants.

WILLIAM ANNAND,
President of the Executive Council.

JARED C. TROOP, M.P.P.
For the County of Annapolis.

HENRY W. SMITH, M.P.P.
For the County of Queens.

14, HANOVER STREET,
London, 23rd March, 1868.